

**CHAPTER 139****(HB 407)**

AN ACT relating to oil and gas.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

Section 1. KRS 353.510 is amended to read as follows:

As used in KRS 353.500 to 353.720, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) "Department" means the Department of Mines and Minerals as defined in KRS 351.010;
- (2) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Mines and Minerals as defined in KRS 351.010;
- (3) "Director" means the director of oil and gas conservation as provided in KRS 353.530;
- (4) "Commission" means the Kentucky Oil and Gas Conservation Commission as provided in KRS 353.565;
- (5) "Person" means any natural person, corporation, association, partnership, receiver, governmental agency subject to KRS 353.500 to 353.720, trustee, so-called common-law or statutory trust, guardian, executor, administrator, or fiduciary of any kind, federal agency, state agency, city, commission, political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or any interstate body;
- (6) "Correlative rights" means the reasonable opportunity of each person entitled thereto to recover and receive without waste the oil and gas in and under his tract or tracts, or the equivalent thereof;
- (7) "Oil" means natural crude oil or petroleum and other hydrocarbons, regardless of gravity, which are produced at the well in liquid form by ordinary production methods and which are not the result of condensation of gas after it leaves the underground reservoir;
- (8) "Gas" means all natural gas, including casinghead gas, and all other hydrocarbons not defined in subsection (7) of this section as oil;
- (9) "Pool" means an underground reservoir containing a common accumulation of oil or gas or both. Each productive zone of a general structure which is completely separated from any other zone in the structure, or which for the purpose of KRS 353.500 to 353.720 may be so declared by the department, is covered by the word "pool" as used herein;
- (10) "Field" means the general area which is underlaid or appears to be underlaid by at least one (1) pool; and "field" includes the underground reservoir containing oil or gas or both. The words "field" and "pool" mean the same thing when only one (1) underground reservoir is involved; however, "field," unlike "pool," may relate to two (2) or more pools;
- (11) "Just and equitable share of production" means, as to each person, an amount of oil or gas or both substantially equal to the amount of recoverable oil and gas in that part of a pool underlying his tract or tracts;
- (12) "Abandoned," when used in connection with a well or hole, means a well or hole which has never been used, or which, in the opinion of the department, will no longer be used for the production of oil or gas or for the injection or disposal of fluid therein;
- (13) "Workable bed" means:

- (a) A coal bed actually being operated commercially;
  - (b) A coal bed that the department decides can be operated commercially and the operation of which can reasonably be expected to commence within not more than ten (10) years; or
  - (c) A coal bed which, from outcrop indications or other definite evidence, proves to the satisfaction of the commissioner to be workable, and which, when operated, will require protection if wells are drilled through it;
- (14) "Well" means a borehole drilled, *shaft driven, or hole dug or such* proposed *or otherwise used* ~~to be drilled,~~ for the purpose of producing natural gas or petroleum, or one through which natural gas or petroleum is being produced, or ~~a borehole drilled or proposed to be drilled~~ for the purpose of injecting any water, gas, or other fluid therein or one into which any water, gas, or other fluid is being injected;
- (15) "Shallow well" means any well drilled and completed at a depth less than four thousand (4,000) feet except, in the case of any well drilled and completed east of longitude line 84 degrees 30'; shallow well means any well drilled and completed at a depth less than four thousand (4,000) feet or above the base of the lowest member of the Devonian Brown Shale, whichever is the deeper in depth;
- (16) "Deep well" means any well drilled and completed below the depth herein provided for a shallow well;
- (17) "Operator" means any owner of the right to develop, operate, and produce oil and gas from a pool and to appropriate the oil and gas produced therefrom, either for himself or for himself and others; in the event that there is no oil and gas lease in existence with respect to the tract in question, the owner of the oil and gas rights therein shall be considered as "operator" to the extent of seven-eighths (7/8) of the oil and gas in that portion of the pool underlying the tract owned by such owner, and as "royalty owner" as to one-eighth (1/8) interest in such oil and gas; and in the event the oil is owned separately from the gas, the owner of the right to develop, operate, and produce the substance being produced or sought to be produced from the pool shall be considered as "operator" as to such pool;
- (18) "Royalty owner" means any owner of oil and gas in place, or oil and gas rights, to the extent that such owner is not an operator as defined in subsection (17) of this section;
- (19) "Drilling unit" generally means the maximum area in a pool which may be drained efficiently by one (1) well so as to produce the reasonable maximum recoverable oil or gas in such area. Where the regulatory authority has provided rules for the establishment of a drilling unit and an operator, proceeding within the framework of the rules so prescribed, has taken the action necessary to have a specified area established for production from a well, such area shall be a drilling unit;
- (20) "Underground source of drinking water" means those subsurface waters identified as such in regulations promulgated by the department which shall be consistent with the definition of underground source of drinking water in regulations promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 U.S.C. secs. 300(f) et seq.;
- (21) "Underground injection" means the subsurface emplacement of fluids by well injection but does not include the underground injection of natural gas for purposes of storage;

- (22) "Endangerment of underground sources of drinking water" means underground injection which may result in the presence in underground water, which supplies or can reasonably be expected to supply any public water system, of any contaminant and if the presence of such contaminant may result in such system's not complying with any national primary drinking water regulation or may otherwise adversely affect the health of persons;
- (23) "Class II well" means wells which inject fluids:
- (a) Which are brought to the surface in connection with conventional oil or natural gas production and may be commingled with waste waters from gas plants which are an integral part of production operations, unless those waters are classified as a hazardous waste at the time of injection;
  - (b) For enhanced recovery of oil or natural gas; and
  - (c) For storage of hydrocarbons which are liquid at standard temperature and pressure;
- (24) "Fluid" means any material or substance which flows or moves whether in a semisolid, liquid, sludge, gas, or any other form or state.

Section 2. KRS 353.565 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) There is hereby created in the Department of Mines and Minerals, the "Kentucky Oil and Gas Conservation Commission" which shall be composed of five (5) members. Four (4) of the members shall be appointed by the Governor and the fifth member, who shall serve as chairman of the commission, shall be the director of oil and gas conservation and who shall serve in an ex officio capacity as a nonvoting member except in the case of a tie. The four (4) members appointed by the Governor shall be residents of this state and not more than one (1) of them may be directly employed in the exploration for or the production of oil or gas, or deriving more than fifty percent (50%) of that person's income from the exploration for or production of oil or gas, or engaged in a business directly servicing or supplying these activities. No member of the commission shall participate in the deliberations of the commission or vote on any matter before the commission in which he, his employer, or any business unit in which he has a financial interest is an interested party, but a member of the commission is not prohibited from deliberating or voting on matters of general interest, such as the fixing of statewide spacing patterns, affecting him, his employer, or a business unit in which he has financial interest as a member of a class of persons to be affected by an administrative regulation or order of the commission. The commission shall not contain more than one (1) representative from any one (1) operator, including subsidiaries or affiliates. Of the four (4) members appointed by the Governor, two (2) shall be residents of eastern Kentucky and two (2) shall be residents of western Kentucky. Longitude 84 deg. 30 min. shall be deemed as the division line between eastern Kentucky and western Kentucky.
- (2) The members of the commission, except the chairman, shall be appointed for terms of four (4) years each, except that:
- (a) The original appointments shall be for terms of one (1), two (2), three (3), and four (4) years respectively; and
  - (b) Of the members appointed after July 15, 1998, one (1) member appointed to fill the term expiring June 21, 1999, shall serve until January 21, 2000; one (1) member appointed to fill the term expiring June 21, 2000, shall serve until January 21, 2001; one (1)

member appointed to fill one (1) of the two (2) terms expiring June 21, 2001, shall serve until January 21, 2002; and one (1) member appointed to fill the second of

the two (2) terms expiring June 21, 2001, shall serve until January 21, 2003; and subsequent appointments shall be for four (4) year terms ending on January 21. Each member appointed by the Governor shall serve until his successor has been appointed and qualified. Members may be reappointed by the Governor to serve successive terms. The members of the commission, before performing any duty hereunder, shall take an oath which shall be certified by the officer administering it. The oath in writing and the certificate shall be filed in the office of the Secretary of State. Vacancies in the membership appointed by the Governor shall be filled by appointment by him and for the unexpired term of the member whose office shall be vacant, and the appointment shall be made by the Governor within sixty (60) days of the occurrence of a vacancy. Any member appointed by the Governor may be removed by the Governor in case of incompetency, neglect of duty, gross immorality, or malfeasance of office.

- (3) The commission shall meet at times and places as shall be designated by the chairman. The chairman may call a meeting of the commission at any time, and he shall call a meeting of the commission upon the written request of two (2) members. Notification of each meeting shall be given in writing to each member by the chairman at least five (5) days in advance of the meeting. Any three (3) members, one (1) of which may be the chairman, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business, including the holding of hearings. A majority of the commission present shall be required to determine any issue brought before it for decision.
- (4) Each member of the commission, except the chairman, shall receive *one hundred* fifty dollars ~~(\$150)~~~~(\$50)~~ per diem not to exceed one hundred (100) days per calendar year while actually engaged in the performance of his duties as a member of the commission. Each member of the commission, including the chairman, shall also be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred in the performance of his duties as a member of the commission.
- (5) The commission shall execute and carry out, administer, and enforce the provisions of KRS 353.651 and 353.652. The commission may make any investigation of records and facilities as it deems proper.
- (6) If an emergency is found to exist by the commission which, in its judgment, requires the making, changing, renewal, or extension of an administrative regulation or order without first having a hearing, an emergency regulation may be promulgated in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A and an emergency order may be issued in accordance with KRS 13B.125.
- (7) The commission shall have specific authority to:
  - (a) Promulgate and enforce reasonable administrative regulations and issue orders reasonably necessary to prevent waste, protect correlative rights, govern the practice and procedure before the commission, and otherwise administer the provisions of KRS 353.651 and 353.652; and
  - (b) Issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and subpoenas duces tecum for the production of any books, records, maps, charts, diagrams, and other pertinent documents, and administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses, whenever, in the judgment of the commission, it is necessary to do so for the effective discharge of its duties under the provisions of KRS 353.651 and 353.652.

- (8) Any interested person may have the commission call a hearing for the purpose of taking action in respect to any matter within the jurisdiction of the commission by making a request therefor in writing. Upon the receipt of any request, the commission promptly shall call a hearing thereon, and, after the hearing and with all convenient speed, and in any event within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the hearing, shall take appropriate action with regard to the subject matter thereof as it may deem appropriate. If the hearing is adjudicatory in nature, it shall be conducted in accordance with KRS Chapter 13B.
- (9) Agreements made in the interest of conservation of oil or gas, or both, or for the prevention of waste, between and among owners or operators, or both, owning separate holdings in the same field or pool, or in any area that appears from geologic or other data to be underlaid by a common accumulation of oil or gas, or both, and agreements between and among these owners or operators, or both, and royalty owners therein, for the purpose of bringing about the development and operation of the field, pool, or area, or any part thereof, as a unit, and for establishing and carrying out a plan for the cooperative development and operation thereof, when the agreements are approved by the commission, are hereby authorized and shall not be held or construed to violate any of the laws of this state relating to trusts, monopolies, or contracts and combinations in restraint of trade.
- (10) Nothing in this section shall be construed as giving to the commission the right or authority to supersede the authority of the department in the administration of KRS 353.060.

Section 3. KRS 353.590 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) Any person seeking a permit required by KRS 353.570 shall submit to the department a written application in a form prescribed by the department.
- (2) Each application shall be accompanied by a specified fee as follows:
  - (a) The fee shall be three hundred dollars (\$300) for each well to be drilled, deepened, or reopened for any purpose relating to the production, repressuring, or storage of oil or gas, and for each water supply well, observation well, and geological or structure test hole.
  - (b) If the department receives delegation of authority for administration of the underground injection control program under Section 1425 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (Public Law 93-523 as amended), the department may, by administrative regulation, establish a fee or schedule of fees in an amount not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50) per well, in addition to the fees imposed by paragraph (a) of this subsection, upon each application to drill, deepen, or reopen a well for any purpose relating to the production, repressuring, or storage of oil or gas, and for each water supply well, observation well, and geological or structure test hole. The fees or schedule of fees to be established by administrative regulation shall not exceed an amount sufficient to recover the costs incurred by the department in administering the Underground Injection Control Program less any other state or federal funds which are made available for this purpose.
  - (c) All money paid to the State Treasurer for fees required by paragraph (b) of this subsection shall be for the sole use of the department in the administration of the Underground Injection Control Program under Section 1425 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (Public Law 93-523 as amended).

- (3) All money paid to the State Treasurer for licenses and fees required by KRS 353.500 to 353.720 shall be for the sole use of the department and shall be in addition to any moneys appropriated by the General Assembly for the use of the department.
- (4) Each application shall be accompanied by a plat, which shows the location and elevation of each well, prepared according to the administrative regulations promulgated under KRS 353.500 to 353.720. The plat shall be certified as accurate and correct by a professional land surveyor *licensed* in accordance with the provisions of KRS Chapter 322.
- (5) When any person submits to the Department of Mines and Minerals an application for a permit to drill a well, or to reopen, deepen, or temporarily abandon any well which is not covered by surety bond, the department shall, except as provided in this section, require from the well operator a bond in the sum of five hundred dollars (\$500) for a well to be drilled to a depth of five hundred (500) feet or less; one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for a well to be drilled to a depth between five hundred and one (501) feet and one thousand (1,000) feet; one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) for a well to be drilled to a depth between one thousand and one (1,001) feet and one thousand five hundred (1,500) feet; two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for a well to be drilled to a depth between one thousand five hundred and one (1,501) feet and two thousand (2,000) feet; two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for a well to be drilled to a depth between two thousand and one (2,001) feet and two thousand five hundred (2,500) feet; three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for a well to be drilled to a depth between two thousand five hundred and one (2,501) feet and three thousand (3,000) feet; three thousand five hundred dollars (\$3,500) for a well to be drilled to a depth between three thousand and one (3,001) feet and three thousand five hundred (3,500) feet; four thousand dollars (\$4,000) for a well to be drilled to a depth between three thousand five hundred and one (3,501) feet and four thousand (4,000) feet; and five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for a well to be drilled to a depth of more than four thousand (4,000) feet. The bonds shall be made in favor of the Department of Mines and Minerals, conditioned that the wells upon abandonment shall be plugged in accordance with the administrative regulations of the department and that all records required by the department be filed as specified. An operator may petition the department to amend the drilling depth and bond amount applicable to a particular well and shall not proceed to drill to a depth greater than that authorized by the department until the operator is so authorized except pursuant to administrative regulations promulgated by the department. The commission may establish a bond in a sum greater than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for any well to be drilled to a depth of more than four thousand (4,000) feet if the members of the commission determine that the particular circumstances of the drilling of the well warrant an increase in the bond amount established above. All bonds shall remain in effect until the plugging of the well is approved by the department, or the bond is released by the department. Any well operator in lieu of the bond may file with the department a blanket bond in a sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), covering all wells drilled or to be drilled in the Commonwealth by the principal in the bond, and the acceptance and approval by the department of the blanket bond shall be in full compliance with the above provision requiring an individual well bond. A deposit in cash or a bank-issued irrevocable letter of credit may serve in lieu of either of the individual well or blanket bonds, and a property bond may be executed by an operator who owns all of the surface and mineral rights of a tract proposed for drilling. A certificate of deposit, the principal of which is pledged in lieu of a bond and whose interest is payable to the party making the pledge, may also be accepted by the department. If an operator is required to post individual well bonds exceeding a total of five thousand dollars

(\$5,000) or elects to post a blanket bond, the certificate of deposit shall be accepted by the department in lieu of that portion of the amount of the bonds exceeding five thousand dollars (\$5,000). The bond or bonds referred to in this section shall be executed by the well operator as principal and, if a surety bond, by a corporate surety authorized to do business in the Commonwealth. A deposit in cash shall serve in lieu of either of the above bonds; all cash bonds accepted by the department shall be deposited into an interest-bearing account, with the interest thereon payable to the special agency account known as the oil and gas well plugging fund, created in subsection (9) of this section, to be used in accordance with the purposes described therein. All cash bonds being held by the department on July 13, 1990, shall likewise be deposited in the interest-bearing account, with the proceeds to be used for the purposes established for the oil and gas well plugging fund. The bond amounts shall be applicable only to permits issued upon and after July 13, 1990. All bonds posted for permits issued prior to July 13, 1990, shall remain in full force and effect for the duration of the permits.

- (6) A successor to the well operator shall post bond, ***pay a twenty-five dollar (\$25) fee per well to the department***, and notify the department in writing in advance of commencing use or operation of a well or wells. The successor shall assume the obligations of this chapter as to a particular well or wells and relieve the original permittee of responsibility under this chapter with respect to the well or wells. It shall be the responsibility of the selling operator to require the successor operator to post bond before use or operation is commenced by the successor and relief of responsibility under this chapter is granted to the original permittee.
- (7) If the requirements of subsection (5) of this section with respect to proper plugging upon abandonment and submission of all required records on all well or wells have not been complied with within the time limits set by the department, by administrative regulation, or by this chapter, the department shall cause a notice of noncompliance to be served upon the operator by certified mail, addressed to the permanent address shown on the application for a permit. The notice shall specify in what respects the operator has failed to comply with this chapter or the administrative regulations of the department. If the operator has not reached an agreement with the department or has not complied with the requirements set forth by it within forty-five (45) days after mailing of the notice, the bond shall be forfeited to the department.
- (8) A bond forfeited pursuant to the provisions of this chapter may be collected by an attorney for the department or by the Attorney General, after notice from the director.
- (9) All sums received under subsection (5) of this section or through the forfeiture of bonds shall be placed in the State Treasury and credited to a special agency account to be designated as the oil and gas well plugging fund, which shall be an interest-bearing account with the interest thereon payable to the fund. This fund shall be available to the department and shall be expended for the plugging of any abandoned wells coming within the authority of the department pursuant to this chapter. The plugging of any well pursuant to this subsection shall not be construed to relieve the operator or any other person from civil or criminal liability which would exist except for the plugging. Any unencumbered and any unexpended balance of this fund remaining at the end of any fiscal year shall not lapse but shall be carried forward for the purpose of the fund until expended or until appropriated by subsequent legislative action.

- (10) Upon request by any person applying for a permit for a geological or structure test hole, the department shall keep the location and elevation of the hole confidential until the information is allowed to be released by the person obtaining the permit.
- (11) For the purpose of this chapter, "water supply well" shall not include:
- (a) Any well for a potable water supply for domestic use or for livestock; or
  - (b) Any water well used primarily for cooling purposes in an industrial process.

Section 4. KRS 353.651 is amended to read as follows:

The following provisions of this section shall apply to any deep well:

- (1) Drilling units:
- (a) The commission shall, after notice and a hearing, to be conducted in accordance with KRS Chapter 13B, regulate the drilling and location of wells in any pool and the production therefrom so as to prevent reasonably avoidable net drainage from each developed unit (that is, drainage which is not equalized by counterdrainage) so that each owner in a pool shall have the right and opportunity to recover his fair and equitable share of the recoverable oil and gas in such pool.
  - (b) For the prevention of waste, to protect and enforce the correlative rights of the owners in a pool, and to avoid the augmenting and accumulation of risks arising from the drilling of an excessive number of wells, the commission shall, after notice and a hearing, to be conducted in accordance with KRS Chapter 13B, establish drilling units for each pool. The spacing of wells in proved oil and gas fields shall be governed by administrative regulations promulgated for that particular field. Wells drilled in areas not covered by special field administrative regulations shall be governed by statewide administrative regulations promulgated by the commission.
  - (c) Each well permitted to be drilled upon any drilling unit shall be drilled in accordance with the administrative regulations promulgated by the commission and in accordance with a spacing pattern fixed by the commission for the pool in which the well is located, with any exceptions that may be reasonably necessary where it is shown, in accordance with administrative regulations promulgated by the commission, that the unit is partly outside the pool or for some other reason a well otherwise located on the unit would not be likely to produce in paying quantities, or topographical conditions are such as to make the drilling at the location unduly burdensome. Whenever an exception is granted, the commission shall take action as will offset any advantage which the person securing the exception may have over other owners by reason of the drilling of the well as an exception.
  - (d) No drilling unit established by the commission shall be smaller than the maximum area which can be drained efficiently by one (1) deep well so as to produce the reasonable maximum recoverable oil or gas in such area, unless an exception is granted in accordance with administrative regulations promulgated by the commission.
  - (e) An order establishing drilling units may be modified, altered, extended, amended, or vacated by the commission after notice and hearing as prescribed above.
- (2) Pooling of interests in drilling units:



- (a) When two (2) or more separately owned tracts are embraced within a drilling unit, or when there are separately owned interests in all or a part of a drilling unit, the interested persons may pool their tracts or interests for the development and operation of the drilling unit. In the absence of voluntary pooling and upon application of any operator having an interest in the drilling unit, and after the commission has given notice to all persons reasonably known to own an interest in the oil or gas in the drilling unit, and after a hearing conducted in accordance with KRS Chapter 13B, the commission shall enter an order pooling all tracts or interests in the drilling unit for the development and operation thereof and for the sharing production therefrom. Each pooling order shall be upon terms and conditions which are just and reasonable.
- (b) All operations, including, but not limited to, the commencement, drilling, or operation of a deep well, upon any portion of a drilling unit for which a pooling order has been entered, shall be deemed for all purposes the conduct of those operations upon each separately owned tract in the drilling unit by the several owners thereof. That portion of the production allocated to a separately owned tract included in a drilling unit shall, when produced, be deemed for all purposes to have been actually produced from the tract by a deep well drilled thereon.
- (c) Any pooling order under the provisions of subsection (2) of this section shall authorize the drilling and operation of a deep well for the production of oil or gas from the pooled acreage; shall designate the operator to drill and operate such deep well; shall prescribe the time and manner in which all owners of operating interests in the pooled tracts or portions of tracts may elect to participate therein; shall provide that all reasonable costs and expenses of drilling, completing, equipping, operating, plugging, and abandoning the deep well shall be borne, and all production therefrom shared, by all owners of operating interests in proportion to the acreage in the pooled tracts owned or under lease to each owner; and shall make provision for payment of all reasonable costs thereof, including reasonable charge for supervision and for interest on past due accounts, by all those who elect to participate therein. Upon the application of any operator having an interest in the drilling unit, the person or persons selected to drill and operate the deep well shall be determined by competitive bids under the procedure set out in KRS 74.260.
- (d) Upon request, any pooling order shall provide just and equitable alternatives whereby an owner of an operating interest who does not elect to participate in the risk and cost of the drilling of a deep well may elect to surrender his interest or a portion thereof to the participating owners on a reasonable basis and for a reasonable consideration, which, if not agreed upon, shall be determined by the commission; or to participate in the drilling of the deep well on a limited or carried basis on terms and conditions which, if not agreed upon, shall be determined by the commission to be just and reasonable.
- (e) If an operator owning an interest in a pooled drilling unit elects not to participate in the risk and cost of drilling of a deep well thereon, and another operator owning an interest therein, shall drill and operate, or pay the costs of drilling and operating a deep well as provided in the commission's order, then the operating owner shall be entitled to the share of production from the tracts or portions thereof accruing to the interest of the nonparticipating owner, exclusive of any royalty or overriding royalty reserved in any leases, assignments thereof or agreements relating thereto, of the tracts or portions thereof, or exclusive of one-eighth (1/8) of the production attributable to all unleased

tracts or portions thereof, until the market value of the nonparticipating owner's share of the production, exclusive of any royalty, overriding royalty or one-eighth (1/8) of production, equals *two (2)*~~[one and one fourth (1 1/4)]~~ times the share of the costs payable by or charged to the interest of the nonparticipating owner.

- (f) If a dispute shall arise as to the costs of drilling and operating a deep well, the commission shall determine and apportion the costs, within ninety (90) days from the date of written notification to the commission of the existence of such dispute.
- (3) This section shall not apply to wells drilled, deepened, or reopened for the injection of water, gas, or other fluids into any subsurface formation.

**Approved March 17, 2000**